

# Meeting Notes

**DATE:** November 15, 2006

**LOCATION:** ADOT Holbrook District Office

**TOPIC:** Holbrook I-40 Regional Transportation Profile Stakeholders Meeting

**ATTENDEES:**

Alex Monsegur, MVD	Jason Hurd, Intrinsic
Heather Boone, Raindancer Youth Services	Jack Husted, White Mountain Regional Transportation Committee
Jack Brooks, Navajo County/Holbrook Fire Chief	Traegen Knight, N2 Legacy
Greg Caffey, Petrified Forest National Park	Akos Kovach, City of Holbrook
Paul DoBell, Holbrook Chamber of Commerce/Petrified Forest Museum Assoc.	Mary Koury, Holbrook School District
Kay Dyson, Mayor, Town of Springerville	Chuck Sargent, Sanders POE
Paul Ferris, City of Winslow	Cynthia Stuart, Holbrook City Council
David Hansen, NPC	Audrey Wennink, Cambridge Systematics
Ron Hatch, Raindancer Youth Services	James Zumpf, ADOT

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James Zumpf of ADOT gave an introduction to the I-40 Regional Transportation Profile project and the context for the stakeholder meeting. Attendees introduced themselves. Audrey Wennink of Cambridge Systematics presented a summary of the project tasks, schedule, and objectives for the stakeholder meeting. Stakeholders were invited to contribute information on needs and deficiencies along the I-40 corridor, including those related to future development, safety, freight, roadway conditions and other issues. Stakeholder comments are listed below and grouped into the major categories of discussion.

## Development

- A 300-unit residential development is planned near exit 283. It is expected to be completed within the year.

- Commercial and residential developments are being considered between exits 289 and 292 near the Hopi Travel Plaza. By December 2007 this area is expected to be annexed by Holbrook.
- A 400-unit residential development is planned for the area between Transcon Lane at Exit 255 and North Park Drive at Exit 253 on the north side of I-40 in Winslow. About 150 residential units are planned for the same area on the south side of I-40.
- The O'Haco family owns 960 acres in Winslow on the north side of I-40 between North Park Drive at Exit 253 and Hipkoe Drive at Exit 252. Substantial commercial development is planned for this area along Mikes Pike including two large retail stores in addition to the new Super Wal-Mart. More than 1,000 residential units may be built in the same area within the next 20 years.
- A 556-unit residential development is planned south of the BNSF railroad tracks in Winslow, which will require direct access to I-40. The City of Winslow is considering constructing a new traffic interchange west of Hipkoe Drive at Exit 252. One very preliminary possibility is to use West Winslow Industrial Road as an alternative route for access to I-40.
- A new shopping center is being constructed in Sanders.
- A casino will very likely be built near milepost 320 on Pinto road by the Navajo Nation.
- The Hopi tribe is considering developing its property around Winslow and expanding a truck stop in Holbrook at Exit 292 and Highway 77.
- Stakeholders said that development impacts to roadways should be addressed during the development permitting process. Developers should be responsible for creating their own access to I-40. The Departments of Commerce and Transportation should both be part of discussions regarding large developments and transportation impacts. Stakeholders said that transportation improvements should be in place before new developments are built. Strategic planning for long-term growth is needed. An example was presented of a county in California requiring a tribe to build a new interchange before they could build a casino.

## Freight

- Major congestion problems exist at Transcon Lane at Exit 255 in Winslow. A truck stop is located at the exit, and it is currently part of a detour route associated with construction of a new North Park Drive traffic interchange at Exit 253.
- Truckers are using many on and off ramps throughout I-40 to park and rest, as sufficient designated rest areas for trucks do not exist.
- Love's Truck Stop at exit 277 was built without improvements to the interchange. The TI was not designed for truck traffic and has inadequate parking. At times access to Joseph City is blocked by trucks. When trucks exit the fuel area they must enter the opposing lane of traffic to turn.

- Approximately 2.5-million trucks in 2006 passed through the Sanders POE, an increase from two million trucks in 2005. The POE processes about 3,000 trucks per shift.
- One participant said ADOT should consider limiting semi trucks to one lane on I-40 and assigning a lower speed limit to that lane. Another participant pointed out that a bill with similar restrictions had passed previously but was rescinded after heavy lobbying from commercial trucking businesses.
- Overweight trucks are damaging roads along the I-40 corridor. Neither the charges for overweight truck permits nor fines for overweight trucks cover the amount of damage they cause to the roadways. I-40 was built 40 years ago to handle vehicles weighing 73,280 pounds, while the current state weight limit is 80,000 pounds. ADOT may wish to review studies by other states to determine the damage caused by each overweight ton and to recalibrate Arizona's overweight fine structure.

## Safety

- Winter I-40 closures are very difficult to manage as there are few alternative routes. One participant suggested that ADOT create a traffic grid to plan alternative routes around a road closure.
- When I-40 is shut down between Holbrook and Winslow, semi trucks have limited on alternative route options due to bridge load limits.
- The limited railroad crossings on the BNSF line parallel to I-40 cause traffic problems. Traffic backs up at Holbrook's one railroad crossing on State Route 77 because trains stop there to switch tracks. Drivers can wait up to half an hour when the roadway is blocked by a train, and a major concern is that emergency vehicles are blocked.
- Condition and age of the roadway, as well as limited ADOT staff are ongoing issues with respect to snow removal. The community needs better snow plows and more personnel for snow removal.
- Sheep and cattle were a problem on I-40 in the Sanders area, but more recently the animals cross the roadway only occasionally.
- In the past 2 or 3 years, several elk have been hit by traffic on I-40 between Holbrook and Winslow.
- Pedestrians have been hit by vehicles on I-40 near the Sanders POE. Sanders is surrounded by a reservation and people often walk on the Interstate.
- The Sanders overpass is very narrow and does not have sufficient space for pedestrians to cross.
- I-40 is the main route for hazardous materials in Arizona. Radioactive materials are transported on I-40 on a weekly basis.
- The Sanders POE has only two hazmat certified inspectors. The POE is an old facility in need of rehabilitation or reconstruction. A new port of entry in Sanders is expected to be built in eight to nine years. The Port has seven inspection bays that are open to the

weather so in inclement weather inspections are not as easily performed. When all the bays are full, additional trucks are able to be inspected. ADOT may wish to review data on the number of trucks inspected and the number of citations issues as compared to total truck volumes to estimate the number of non-compliant trucks not being inspected.

### Other Issues

- Communities within the White Mountain area, including Springerville, are working to obtain a Little Colorado River Valley National Heritage Area designation by the U.S. Congress. The objective of this designation is to preserve cultural elements in the region and stimulate economic growth. The designation would build upon the Trail of Many Tracks, an auto touring route from Lupton/Sanders to Winslow that is designed to draw travelers off I-40 for a trip through the Little Colorado River Plateau and White Mountains in southern Navajo and Apache Counties and Coconino County. Tourism is a major industry in this area and needs to be considered by this study. Concern exists about auto drivers' access to this tourism area if tourists perceive driving on I-40 as unsafe due to the large number of trucks.
- Most of the towns along I-40 need more overpasses and sound deadening materials.